

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 1422  
By: West  
Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Many courts currently allow for electronic filing, or e-filing, of documents, and e-filing will soon become mandatory for most Texas courts. Interested parties observe, however, that attorneys are not authorized in statute to digitally sign documents in certain family law cases. As a result, documents are sometimes printed on paper for the sole purpose of applying a signature and then are subsequently scanned back into digital format for e-filing. S.B. 1422 seeks to eliminate the unnecessary process of printing certain legal documents that will be e-filed by allowing the use of digitized signatures in certain family law cases.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

S.B. 1422 amends the Family Code to establish that a digitized signature, defined by the bill as a graphic image of a handwritten signature having the same legal force and effect for all purposes as a handwritten signature, on an original petition or any other pleading or order in a suit affecting the parent-child relationship satisfies the requirements for and imposes the duties of signatories to pleadings, motions, and other papers identified under Rule 13, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure. The bill requires a digitized signature to be applied by and to remain under the sole control of the person whose signature is represented.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2013.